Numb. XVIII.

The GUARDIAN.

——*Animæque capaces*
Mortis—— Lucan.

Wednesday, April 1. 1713.

THE Prospect of Death is so gloomy and dismal, that if it were constantly before our Eyes, it would imbitter all the Sweets of Life. The gracious Author of our Being hath therefore so formed us, that we are capable of many pleasing Sensations and Reflections, and meet with so many Amusements and Solicitudes, as divert our Thoughts from dwelling upon an Evil, which, by reason of its seeming distance, makes but languid Impressions upon the Mind. But how distant soever the Time of our Death may be, since it is certain that we must die, it is necessary to allot some Portion of our Life to consider the end of it; and it is highly convenient to fix some stated Times to meditate upon the final Period of our Existence here. The Principle of Self-love, as we are Men, will make us enquire, what is like to become of us after our Dissolution? and our Conscience, as we are Christians, will inform us, that according to the Good or Evil of our Actions here, we shall be translated to the Mansions of eternal Bliss or Misery. When this is seriously weighed, we must think it Madness to be unprepared against that black Moment; but when we reflect that perhaps that black Moment may be to Night, how watchful ought we to be!

I was wonderfully affected with a Discourse I had lately with a Clergyman of my Acquaintance upon this Head, which was to this Effect: "The "Consideration, said the good Man, that my Being "is precarious, moved me many Years ago to "make a Resolution, which I have diligently kept, "and to which I owe the greatest Satisfaction "that a mortal Man can enjoy. Every Night be"fore I address my self in private to my Creator, "I lay my Hand upon my Heart, and ask my self, "Whether if God should require my Soul of me "this Night, I could hope for Mercy from him? "The bitter Agonies I underwent, in this my first "Acquaintance with my self, were so far from "throwing me into Despair of that Mercy which "is over all God's Works, that they rather proved "Motives to greater Circumspection in my future "Conduct. The oftener I exercised my self in "Meditations of this Kind, the less was my An"xiety; and by making the Thoughts of Death fa"miliar, what was at first so terrible and shocking "is become the sweetest of my Enjoyments. These "Contemplations have indeed made me serious, "but not sullen; nay, they are so far from having "soured my Temper, that as I have a Mind per"fectly composed, and a secret Spring of Joy in "my Heart, so my Conversation is pleasant, and "my Countenance serene. I taste all the innocent "Satisfactions of Life pure and sincere; I have no "Share in Pleasures that leave a Sting behind them, "nor am I cheared with that kind of Mirth, *in the* "*midst of which there is Heaviness.*

Of all the Professions of Men, a Soldier's chiefly should put him upon this religious Vigilance. His Duty exposes him to such Hazards, that the Evil which to Men in other Stations may seem far distant, to him is instant, and ever before his Eyes. The Consideration, that what Men in a Martial Life purchase is gained with Danger and Labour, and must perhaps be parted with very speedily, is the Cause of much Licence and Riot. As moreover it is necessary to keep up the Spirits of those who are to encounter the most terrible Dangers, Offences of this Nature meet with great Indulgence. But there is a Courage better founded than this Animal Fury. The secret Assurance, that all is right within, that if he falls in Battel he will the more speedily be crown'd with true Glory, will add Strength to a Warrior's Arm, and Intrepidity to his Heart.

One of the most successful Stratagems whereby *Mahomet* became formidable, was the Assurance that Impostor gave his Votaries, that whoever was slain in Battel should be immediately conveyed to that luxurious *Paradise* his wanton Fancy had invented. The antient *Druids* taught a Doctrine which had the

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